

# SPARK GAP

## M A R C

## Link Radio Special Event Update

(Tick-tick-tick-tick-tick) The date is fast approaching for the Link Special Event radio event to take place. Bright and early on Saturday the 23rd we will begin setting up for a full-blown ham radio special event extravaganza. We will have radios, cables, and wiring temporarily set up in the Link auditorium and antennas set up outside.

We have received commitments for the equipment we will need; now all we will need is people interested in participating on the air with the rest of the wide wide world. Volunteers are welcome, and you don't even have to have a license to join in. We will be operating with the specially designated callsign of W9L. We will be operating with the maximum amateur privileges allowed by the FCC. With sunspot numbers climbing, we should be able to let interested hams around the world know the facts and figures of the Link. Publicity has been arranged and readers of the two major ham radio magazines, *QST* and *CQ*, have all the facts about the event. This will give

us a chance to spread the word about this historic facility. Maybe we might even see if wayward IAS member Joe Goss in Arizona can arrange to find a local ham to let him talk with those of us back in good old Indiana. We plan on using phone (voice) as our primary mode of communication, so you don't have to worry about knowing Morse code. However, some of our esteemed members are pretty adept at code and we plan on giving them a chance to show their stuff too. If you want to see something incredible, watch these folks at work!

### Special Event Station

**W9L**

on the air

October 23<sup>rd</sup>

From the Link Observatory.

to come on down. For further information or to reserve a time slot, please call Rick Reneau at (317) 780-1803 or send your email to [kb9ndf@arrl.net](mailto:kb9ndf@arrl.net). We hope to see you there!

(See the map on Page 3 for directions)

— KB9NDF

### CLUB MEETING AND PICNIC

October 16<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM

This year the annual club picnic will be at the Johnson County Park. We will be gathering for a picnic beginning at 11:00 AM.

New officers will also be installed. All ballots must be returned before the close of voting at this meeting.

October 1999

## The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club Membership      Newsletter

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club is based in Franklin, Indiana. Membership is open to all amateur radio operators and other interested persons.

Club meetings are conducted on the third Saturday of each month in the training room of the Johnson County Emergency Operations Center at 1100 Hospital Road in Franklin, IN.

Membership dues are \$18.00 per year for full members. Other types of membership are available.

Amateur Radio Operator License testing is offered following the club meeting during the months of March through November.

The club maintains an open repeater on the 2-meter band at 146.835 MHz. Each full member has access to the repeater and autopatch.

Membership dues payment and change of address should be mailed to the club treasurer at the address listed below.

The Spark Gap is the monthly club newsletter. Articles and information that would be of interest to the club members are welcome. Information may be submitted by E-mail or by mailing to the club address listed below.

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(N9NZI)

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(WD9GMM)

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(W8ISH)

JR Osborne  
(KB9HSE)

Larry Turner  
(KB9PWN)

Al Soltis  
(WA9ZET)

**Activities**  
Jack Parker  
(W8ISH)

Bob LaGrange  
(N9SIU)

Other

Appointments

Pending

**Membership**  
Larry Turner  
(KB9PWN)

Bill Goodall  
(K9DBY)

Other

Appointments

Pending

## Active Committees



**MARC, PO Box 836, Franklin, IN 46131**

A SPECIAL SERVICE CLUB OF THE ARRL



## The Goblin patrol

With an eye toward the mischief and seasonal vandalism of Halloween the Johnson County Sheriff's Department and the Mid-State ARC will combine forces to patrol Johnson county that night.

According to county officials the use of Amateur Radio operators in unmarked vehicles has resulted in fewer reports of vandalism on beggars night. The extra cars provide a measure of safety to the trick-or-treaters. The Halloween Night patrols will be controlled from the Emergency Operations Center. Patrols will cover only rural areas of Johnson County. Schoolyards,

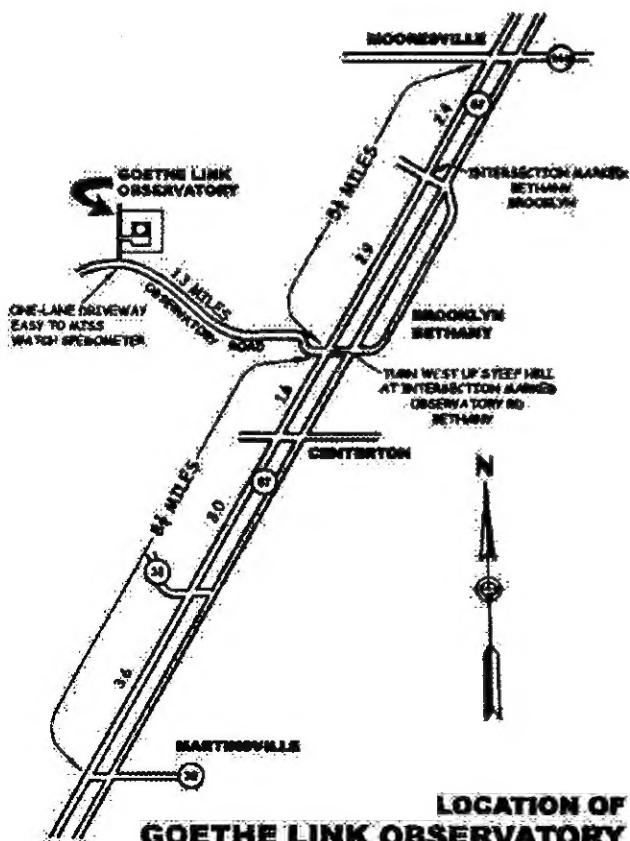
cemeteries, overpasses and neighborhoods will be checked periodically for any suspicious activity.

Net control is scheduled to start at 6 PM and run until about 9 PM or until released by the sheriff. All participating ham radio operators will be asked to provide a description of their vehicle and license number.

Further details will be announced at the October meeting and picnic. Information updates may be announced during the Sunday night net.

- W8ISH

### Special Event, W9L October 23rd



**LOCATION OF  
GOETHE LINK OBSERVATORY**  
Phone Number: (765) 831-9668

### Amateur Radio License Plate

Remember that anyone wishing to purchase an Amateur Radio vanity license plate must pay \$5.00 and register with the Indiana BMV in the next few weeks.

- W8ISH

### *Curran* Electronics Sales and Service

*We repair most brands of amateur,  
Business band, CB's and scanners.*

**Donna Curran**  
KA9SWK

1217 N. Wittfield  
Phone 317-898-2338

**Tom Curran**  
N9DZJ

Indianapolis, IN 46229  
Fax 317-898-1574

Wittfield St. is the first street east of Post Road on Tenth St., then north on Wittfield to 1217 (RED MAILBOX)

# ULS VANITY PROCESSING INCHES FORWARD

The FCC's new Universal Licensing System has moved a bit closer to resuming full-scale amateur vanity call sign processing.

Several lucky applicants who had submitted call sign requests in the pre-ULS era benefited in recent days from some "live" testing of the ULS vanity processing system. A few not-so-lucky applicants learned this week, however, that the FCC had to rescind some of those vanity grants it cranked out—and should not have—during those "test runs."

Until last week, no vanity call signs had been granted since August 4. The ULS has been accepting vanity applications since it inaugurated the ULS for the Amateur Service August 16, however.

Some 30 vanity call sign applications dating from July were processed September 18. The FCC ran a batch of another 50 or so vanity applications September 21. "We're taking it slow," a ULS spokesperson said.

But while reviewing the vanity applications processed, FCC personnel found some that should not have been granted in the first place, because the applicants made various fatal errors in the application process. The FCC says those call signs will be cancelled and the applications dismissed.

"And there will be plenty more, I'm sure," the spokesperson said, anticipating additional

(Reprinted from *The ARRL Letter*)

dismissals down the road. The FCC has the option of rescinding any grant within 30 days.

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Barring any unforeseen major problems, the FCC anticipates additional "live test" runs before resuming full-scale vanity processing, possibly by month's end. Once that happens, vanity call sign processing will occur every day for eligible applications based on date of receipt. Gone under ULS are weekly processing runs and the dreaded work-in-process—or WIPs—stack of applications that were kicked out of the former automated system and designated for manual processing. Under the ULS, applications that would have gotten an additional manual review in the past now will be automatically dismissed and returned to the applicant for correction and resubmission.

Vanity applications not accompanied by payments within the 10-day deadline will be dismissed automatically. The ULS now permits applicants to make credit card payments on-line. The fee for a vanity call sign application increased to \$14 on September 14.

In the wake of comments and criticisms about the difficulty of having to configure a dial-up connection with a particular browser (Netscape version 4.5 or higher, and version 4.61 preferred) to file an application, the ULS Task Force says it's planning to convert to electronic filing via the Internet. But a spokesperson says that is not likely to happen for another six to nine months. In the meantime, some have opted to file a paper Form 605 instead.

## A n n o u n c e m e n t !

Ladies and Gentlemen, It is with great joy (and no small measure of chest puffing on her dad's part) that we proudly announce the issuance of...

\*\*\*\*\* KB9VEP \*\*\*\*\*

to Kimberly M. Reneau on 9/17/99.

She will no doubt be receiving visitors on various VHF/UHF frequencies scattered throughout the central Indiana area. Heheheheh

-KB9NDF

# Exploring Simplex Operation

## It's Advantages and Disadvantages

By Dennis Boyle KB9RRN

In the world of VHF and UHF operation, especially on 2 meters, we have repeaters. We have lots of repeaters. We have repeaters linked together providing coverage across large areas. We have dual band systems and crossband systems, systems with remote receivers to increase the coverage for low-power or distant stations, low profile repeaters serving smaller areas, and high profile single site repeaters such as the 835.

Having all these repeaters around is great, but sometimes hams can get "stuck" on repeaters, not venturing out to explore the other types of VHF and UHF operation. One of these other modes is FM simplex. FM SIMPLEx is just that: simple! No offsets or PL tones are required, and there are no odd splits, procedures, or access tones to remember. Simplex is one station communicating directly with another on the same frequency. In the central region of Indiana, 2 meter FM simplex is situated on the band between 146.400 to 146.595, and again from 147.400 to 147.595. When operating on simplex, bear in mind that this is a regional, unofficial band plan, sometimes known as a "Gentlemen's Agreement". In other regions of the country, Western Pennsylvania, for example, some frequencies that are simplex in our area are used as repeater frequencies, and many, if not all of these, use +1 MHz input pairs. This is just one example of the inconsistency in the band plan that can exist while operating simplex in different regions of the country, so be careful!

If you don't want to have to worry about bandplans or Gentlemen's Agreements, you could always use national simplex frequencies. On 2 meters, national simplex is located at 146.52 MHz, and on 70 centimeters it's at 446.0 MHz. National Simplex frequencies also exist for 220 and 6, and these are 223.5 and 52.525 respectively. One possible disadvantage to using the nationally allocated simplex frequency is that it can sometimes be congested with many stations doing the same thing you're doing!

A good way to tell if simplex operation with another station is possible after making contact on a repeater is to listen to the "reverse", or the repeater's input frequency. Most modern radios have a function that allows this. If you hear the station on the input just fine, it's probably a good idea to go to a simplex frequency. This is advantageous because it frees up the repeater for someone else to use it that may need it. Another advantage of simplex is it's increased privacy factor. Since most of us have stations that are considerably lower profile than most repeater systems and what we're saying isn't being retransmitted on a frequency that many people may be listening to, the factor of being listened to is reduced. Simplex is also great for short range, tactical communications, if repeaters go down, or certain tactical applications in emergency situations.

Along with its many advantages, simplex also has disadvantages. Like any form of wireless communication, line-of-sight, power, terrain, antenna type and height, and band conditions limit range— yes, there is such a thing as favorable and unfavorable band conditions on VHF and UHF— along with many other variables. Even with these disadvantages, FM simplex is a viable, useful mode of amateur communications.

If you're interested in simplex operation, there's even a net on simplex! The Central Indiana ARES Simplex Net operates every Thursday at 7:30 PM on 146.49 MHz. The net includes bulletins, a social comments session, and the ARRL Audio News. Come join in with this useful, SIMPLE mode of operation!

# LEAGUE OPPOSES LA COUNTY EXPERIMENTAL VIDEO PROPOSAL

The ARRL has asked the FCC to deny an experimental license application by Los Angeles County, California, to develop a public safety video system on the 2.4 GHz band. The LA County proposal, filed August 9, seeks FCC authorization to develop an experimental system using four 10-MHz channels to transmit video images from helicopter-borne cameras to five remote receiving sites with active tracking antennas. The signals then would be retransmitted via terrestrial links to the public safety agencies involved.

In its objection, filed September 23 with the FCC, the League called the LA County proposal a "foot in the door" toward gaining a permanent berth in the 2.4 GHz band. "It is obvious from the experimental proposal that the County wishes to construct the entire system and then simply stay there," the League said. The ARRL said the FCC should authorize nothing more than a single 10-MHz video channel for a single transmitter aboard a single helicopter, to allow interference studies to be conducted.

LA County already is licensed for video operations on a single 2.4 GHz channel but says it encounters operational conflicts with broadcasters. The proposal targets the 2402-2448 MHz band, characterizing it as "underutilized" and asserting that current occupants—including Amateur Radio and industrial, scientific and medical instrumentation—would not suffer harmful

(Reprinted from *The ARRL Letter*)

interference. Amateurs have a primary domestic allocation at 2402-2417 MHz.

The League's objection said LA County's 2.4 GHz monitoring study was "significantly flawed" and "woefully insufficient," and that LA County would be unable to avoid causing "constant, harmful interference" to incumbent users. Citing ATV repeaters and video links as well as proposed amateur satellite operation, the League said, the 2.4 GHz band enjoys significant use by the LA area Amateur Radio community. The League said these systems, and those of other amateur users, would be "seriously degraded or displaced" by deployment of the proposed experimental system.

The decision to grant the proposed experimental license is up to the FCC Office of Engineering and Technology's Experimental Licensing Division. In making its decision, however, the OET is expected to consult with the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, which oversees Amateur Radio and the other affected services on 2.4 GHz.

In a separate, but related, filing on September 1, Los Angeles County and the cities of Los Angeles, Long Beach and Burbank requested a declaratory ruling from the FCC to "clarify its rules to facilitate public safety operations on the 2450-2483 MHz band" and to explore other spectrum allocations "to accommodate the growing demand for public safety airborne operation."

## VE Team Announces More New Operators!

Brent Easterday, Indianapolis, Tech

John Ankrom, Greenfield, Extra

Robert Simcox, Extra  
-KA9OOH

• • • What famous American document begins: "We the people"? • • •  
• • • What is the first book of the Bible? What are the first three words? • • •